

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 31, 2013

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Members of the Grand Island Veterans Home notified of opportunity to sign petition

Lincoln – Members of the Grand Island Veterans' Home will have an opportunity on Thursday to sign a member-generated petition regarding the future site of the Central Nebraska Veterans' Home. A room has been set aside where members can sign the petition if they wish. The Veterans' Home is not able to accommodate the public for signing of a petition.

"Our Veterans' Homes serve vulnerable populations," said Kerry Winterer, CEO of the Department of Health and Human Services. "In Grand Island, for example, nearly 72 percent of our members have active guardianships or powers of attorney appointed for them. At the end of July, 65 percent of the members are in skilled care, 20 percent in Alzheimer's care, and 15 percent in assisted living.

"We have a responsibility to ensure that members' rights are respected and protected, which is why we haven't allowed people to go room to room with petitions," he said. "When we heard that a member wanted to offer this petition, we designated a specific area for that purpose and posted the information for our members."

Employees of the Grand Island Veterans' Home are focusing on providing medical and other necessary care to the members and keeping a positive home environment. There have been media reports that employees' jobs have been threatened for voicing their opinions. Employees have been asked not to comment on the site decision while working with members, since there are members and families on both sides of this issue; however, employees are otherwise free to discuss their thoughts.